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Boston. March 7. 1874.

Henry D. Wentz:

Dear Sir — In answer to your letter I would state, that I must decline the proposition contained in it, in regard to purchasing the rifle in your possession, as, for forty years, I have been avowedly a radical peace man, and am sure for beating all swords into ploughshares and all spears into pruning-hooks, so that every man may sit under his own vine and fig-tree, with none to molest or make afraid. I gave no sanction to John Brown's method of emancipating the slaves, though conceding to him the purest and noblest motives.

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According to the theory of our government and the example of our revolutionary sires, he was a hero and a martyr, and so the civilized world regards him. That you should have had a hand in his capture and death, however true to your sense of duty at that time, is now, I trust, a matter of deep regret on your part, seeing that while he remembered those in bonds as bound with them, you took sides with their cruel oppressors.

Yours for the reign of universal freedom and peace,

Wm. Lloyd Garrison.

Note.

Henry D. Wertz, to whom the preceding letter was written, professed to be a school-teacher in Peoria, Illinois, & to be the possessor of a Sharp's rifle which he had picked up in the Engine House at Harper's Ferry in Oct '59, when, as a citizen of Martinsburg, Va., he had entered it at the heels of the U.S. Marines under Robert E. Lee. This rifle he offered to W. L., whose letter in reply came back through the Dead Letter Office. The original I have now (Aug. 13, 1893) given to G. Birbeck Hill, of London, with Wertz's letter.

F. J. G.

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